

## **RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS (REE) SHUTDOWN ACTION PLAN**

Following is the action plan for the orderly termination of work in the absence of an appropriation for the:

Agricultural Research Service (ARS)  
Economic Research Service (ERS)  
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

### **Prior to Enactment of Appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014**

1. REE “excepted” categories of activities necessary for the continuation of Agency activities:
  - Law enforcement, health and safety for the security of facilities at BARC.
  - Protect and preserve essential IT systems and equipment that store Agency specific data.
  - Conducting essential activities to the extent that they protect life and property including:
    - The care and maintenance of all animals and animal germplasm on experiments or scheduled to be used in experiments or for which research data are being collected.
    - The care and maintenance of all plants and plant germplasm being used in experiments or scheduled to be used in experiments or for which research data are being collected.
    - The security, care, and maintenance of all plant and animal germplasm collections, microbial, insect and plant taxonomic collections (clonal) repositories, disease free stocks, virus, bacterial and other materials used for research purposes.
    - The maintenance of the facilities housing the above research materials including the necessary heat, light, power, refrigeration and supporting mechanical and equipment systems.
    - Where applicable, the continuation of essential support service and supplies from cooperators and contractors under cooperative agreements, services and supply contracts, purchase orders and commercial purchase cards limited only to those services and supplies, including parts, essential to protect the above described research property. Any equipment purchases must be directly related to the impending loss of research property.

Excepted employees will be ordered to continue work to assure the protection and safety of life and property.

2. After notification that a shutdown is possible, or if a shutdown appears imminent, REE will identify activities associated with and employees required to complete orderly shutdown:
  - Managers and supervisors should begin to identify those functions that need to be performed which are associated with an orderly shutdown of normal activities. Such functions may include, but are not limited to:

- Taking measures to secure files;
  - Making contacts outside the Agency that are necessary to communicate our status;
  - Cancelling meetings and other previously arranged Agency business;
  - Documenting the status of specially funded projects with Agency cooperatives; i.e., cooperative/research support agreements.
- Managers and supervisors should begin to identify those **employees** whose presence at work will be required to perform the functions associated with the orderly shutdown of Agency activities, as outlined above. Such identifications should be based on:
    - Only those employees who are necessary for the orderly termination of activity;
    - Only that number of such employees as required to perform the tasks, keeping in mind the need for both professional judgment to be applied, as well as support staff services required;
    - The best supervisory judgment regarding the specific individuals necessary to continue essential work; and
    - Provide access to the site for essential contractors and be available to respond to related inquiries.
  - Complete the matrix template shown in Appendix A and submit to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis when requested.
  - Daily reports on the status of the activities undertaken for shutdown will be provided by the Deputy Administrator or Associate Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management, to the REE Administrators, then to the REE Under Secretary, then to the Office of the Secretary.

**Following are actions to be completed by Administrative and Financial Management Divisions:**

1. Human Resources Division Actions:

- Hold the final excepted employee list for T&A purposes.
- Issue Q&A's on furlough to all employees, bargaining units, and partnership councils.
- Issue guidance and instructional materials to all employees related to policy issues (e.g., T&A's, maxiflex, notification of volunteers).
- Issue guidance to REE agencies on the steps in the "orderly shutdown" of operations in accordance with Departmental guidance.
- Prepare, review, and approve individual furlough notices (if required).
- Provide appropriate notification to employee unions.

2. Financial Management & Agreements Division Actions:

- Oversee the orderly shutdown of financial business/systems and be on call to support excepted functions.
- Advise employees not to plan official travel beyond the official furlough date, which in this situation would be October 1, 2013. Travel should be planned to terminate on or before the official furlough date or after the furlough is lifted.
- Advise employees that travel planned on or after the furlough date should not commence in the event of a shutdown. Travel orders already issued would be considered invalid.
- Advise passport custodians to retrieve all passports held by employees and secure them in the custodian's safe.
- Advise employees to secure all hard copy tickets for travel during the period of lapsed appropriation.
- Advise employees that all Government issued credit cards (e.g., US Bank Travel Card, Purchase Cards, Fleet Cards, FTS Telephone Calling Cards, etc.) should be in the possession of the individual cardholder or stored in a secure location.
- Advise employees that no travel arrangements or ticket purchases should be made through GovTrip or directly with the TMCs during the period of lapsed appropriation.
- GovTrip approving officials should not stamp any documents in the system during the period of the lapsed appropriation.
- Provide advice and guidance on establishing or continuing existing Extramural Agreements deemed for the purpose of providing adequate care and protection of Government property; i.e., facilities, land, and/or livestock.
- Provide advice and guidance on transaction processing procedures to obtain/retain essential cooperator services as noted above.

### 3. Agency OCIO Actions:

- Instruct employees to turn off all computer equipment and change voicemail messages.
- Advise employees on the status of their Agency IT systems.
- Secure all websites; no updates during shutdown period.

### 4. Acquisition and Property Division Actions:

- Provide guidance on how to process essential requirements for supply contracts.
- Issue guidance to ensure that personal property (including securing hazardous materials pending disposal actions) is safeguarded to protect against theft and destruction.

- Provide guidance to AFM Business Service Centers to inform O&M and other service contractors of the Government's status and the limits/changes under which they will have to operate.

5. Facilities Division Actions:

- Provide guidance to the AFM Business Service Centers on how to process on-going contracts for construction and architectural-engineering (a-e) services funded from prior year and no-year appropriations.
- Inform A-E and construction contractors of the Government status and what limits/changes they will have to operate under via the AFM Business Service Centers.

### **Day One of Furlough**

- All employees will report to work as usual on the first work day following the expiration of a continuing resolution with no subsequent authorization. Employees will be instructed to either begin their excepted activity work or complete any necessary close-down activities and leave their worksite as instructed by their supervisor. Employees can only, for example:
  - Notify parties involved in Agency matters of shutdown of normal business;
  - Prepare files for permanent storage, transfer to related agencies, or other disposition;
  - Perform those tasks necessary to protect confidential information, including listing all papers to be accorded confidential status; and
  - Perform requisite administrative functions such as taking measures necessary to insure that employees are accorded all due personnel rights.
- Any employee on travel status should be contacted and told to return to the duty station immediately.
- Each employee whose shutdown function is complete will be notified and furloughed immediately.
- Excepted employees will be notified of their status and responsibilities by the supervisors.
- Contractors will be notified of the Government's status and the limits/changes under which they will have to operate.

### **Day Two (and Beyond) of Furlough**

- Employees whose shutdown activities have not been completed will report for work. These employees will continue only those activities associated with shutdown as described above. Once completed these employees will be furloughed.
- All employees identified as "excepted" will report to work and will continue activities as outlined by their supervisors.

### **Upon Enactment of Appropriation**

- Employees should check the OPM website and listen to media outlets for updates.
- Managers and supervisors will be notified to return to duty and instructed to recall their staff.

### **Continuation / Discontinuation of Activities**

We still believe there is an opportunity to avoid a government shutdown but are working to ensure that we are prepared for all possible scenarios. Agency operational plans are still being finalized, but in the event of a government shutdown most USDA activities would be shut down or significantly reduced and most USDA employees would be furloughed. However, certain USDA activities would continue because they are related to law enforcement, the protection of life and property, or are financed through available funding (such as through user fees). These include:

- Care for animals, plants and associated infrastructure to protect U.S. Government property.

Most other USDA activities would not be continued during a government shutdown. These activities include:

- Market news reports, NASS statistics, and other agricultural economic and statistical reports and projections would be discontinued
- Research facilities would be closed except for the care for animals, plants and associated infrastructure to preserve agricultural research
- Provision of new grants or processing of payments for existing grants to support research, education, and extension; and
- ERS Commodity Outlook Reports, Data Products, research reports, staff analysis, and projections would be discontinued. The ERS public website would be taken offline.

## MATRIX TEMPLATE

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN THE EVENT OF A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Agency	Current On-Board Staff	Estimated Employment by Category					Total After Day 5	Total % of Staff after Day 5
		I	II	III 2nd Half Day One	III Day 2	III Day 5		
ARS	8,068	2	0	760	400	400	402	4.98%
ERS	334	0	0	3	0	0	0	0.00%
NASS	1,371	0	6	0	0	0	6	0.44%
NIFA	417	0	0	5	0	0	0	0.00%

## KEY:

- Category I: Law Enforcement, Health and Safety  
Category II: Financed from Available Funds (prior year or no year funds)  
Category III: Protect Life and Property

Summary of Category I Activities:

This category includes the Security Office at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). Does not include those employees that would be needed in case of an event that would trigger COOP or Business Continuity.

Summary of Category II Activities:

Represents NASS' Information Technology Division (ITD) employees required to protect IT infrastructure. NASS will utilize Census funds, which are no-year funds, to support this activity. 6 people are required in NASS to support data collection activities for Crop Production data and the Census of Agriculture.

Summary of Category III Activities:

Second half of day 1 includes key supervisors and support personnel in HQ and the field to facilitate and support the orderly shutdown of projects and ongoing research efforts. The remaining days are key personnel to protect and preserve the health and well-being of animals as well as maintain and protect ARS facilities and IT systems. Represents ERS' Information Technology employees required to protect IT infrastructure. Represents NIFA's Information Technology employees required to protect IT infrastructure.

## NOTES:

- Current On-Board staff numbers represent permanent and temporary employees as indicated by the National Finance Center (NFC).
- On-Call employees
  - ARS will have 3 employees in HQ on call for IT (ARS has over 90 locations nationwide and this number will fluctuate depending on where in the field we need on call assistance)
  - ARS will have 3 employees in HQ on call for COOP (ARS has over 90 locations nationwide and this number will fluctuate depending on where in the field we need on call assistance)
  - ARS will have 9 Patent Attorneys on call in order to meet deadlines to protect US Government patent rights
  - ARS will have 3 Time and Attendance Keepers on call (provides service to ARS, ERS, NASS and NIFA)
  - NIFA will have 5 employees on call for IT
  - NIFA will have 3 employees on call for COOP
  - NASS will have 3 employees on call for COOP
  - ERS will have 3 employees on call for IT
  - ERS will have 2 employees on call for COOP (one of the 2 are also one of the 3 on call for IT)